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Bard

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Came calling. Nodded
once and fell to sleep. Does any
fall sometimes wake. A vacuum
cleaner woke him not long after.

Call that a night and a morning
and come calling. A carafe
bedside. Out there commotion.
What train could be so long.

Animal or? Calling out he
slept again. Next time time
itself did the waking. Ocean
dreams the doctor called them

remember. The doctor is everywhere,
is everyone come calling
to inspect what you have become.
the doctor has a satchel full of names,

one or more he imposes on me
he thinks right next to the carafe
now empty. See when we wake
the thoughts grow longer, more,

more people in them, each with names.
Sometimes impossible to remember
where the thought took over
and sleeping slept. Vacuum logic.

Night before morning. Then night
comes again, calling. He calls
this thinking, and there is no one
close enough to tell him he is wrong.

1 April 2009

THINKING

is not thinking.

Any more than seeing

a cat is being a cat.

One with white feet.

1 April 2009

= = = = =

Any I
like signs and coins and flags
a coin
is not what it can buy
a coin is what is.
From my house
two dozen flagstaffs stick out
proud with banners of lost countries.

The lands
the islands are still there
safe in the actual.
But there needs to be
I swear
an ecology of signs
to protect them
from exploration,
exploitation, extinction—
all the gloomy
Latin words that rule the world.

Make the street
safe for signs!
Green heraldry!
Eco-numismatics!

I appeal to the Christian child in you
who knows that symbol's nobler than substance,
host dissolving on your personal tongue
right here, heaven in your head and nothing far.

1 April 2009

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The lion left now and the cloud withdraws
from earth returns to sky. “Grey day,
Cronopios.” The elm cut down last summer
its stump is fresh and clean and white
like a new-delivered revelation—
have I read this scripture even yet
after all this winter? No time for new.
The old stuff still needs deciphering:
rock, leaf, scorpion. God knows how long
it takes the simplest thing to be. And go
on being. Grey days are best, light
enough to see but not to see light itself.
that maddening original, that boisterous Child.

1 April 2009

= = = = =

Couldn't tell his body from a dream.
A golf course hidden in the mind,
a game he never played, felt no interest,
but there it was, vast well-tended sweep
of lawn, the one neat thing in his head.

Let us walk here, he thought, and see who else
we might find walking in the cool of the evening.
None of them played. These meadows
were meant for looking, walking, meeting,
walking away. How soon our conversations end,
the links empty again. Not even hard to keep
trying, no effort required, the ground itself
carries him along. It carries us all along.
He read Chaucer in college, knows how things rhyme.

1 April 2009

LIBATION

But do you even want to know why this happened,
a reason for everything but nobody knows
when someone you know dies but you don't know her
what do you do? what do you do
with what you don't know?
Can this feeble ignorance console the mourners—
the ones who knew her— can you just stand here
like a dumb flower withered on the funeral wreath,
what good does it do to kill a hundred flowers
because one woman dies? What can you offer
that helps anything stay alive? Stand there
thinking us all up out of the grave, out of ashes,
console yourself with specious resurrections?
What you know wouldn't fill a bottlecap
but pour it out anyhow on her filled-in grave.

1 April 2009

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But was there a moment
when the tiger wasn't
and that acre of jungle
was alone and quiet?

I dreamed I stood up on the grassland
Nebraska, maybe, or Dakota of the horses,
and saw from one horizon to the other
nothing but me. Right there

the exact middle of the world.

I was born at last. A man
on earth and nothing more.
Nothing but me and nothing but that.

1 April 2009

= = = = =

People stand next to each other
not being there. The Twin Towers fell
because we can't talk to each other—
standing, they were a sign, a man
standing next to another
man in amity. Love vanishes
from the places where it mattered—
lovers, art deviants, heretics—
and hides in rubble. Find love
where you find two people
standing beside each other,
love has emptied their pockets and fled.
Dante watched from his foolish bridge
the sluggish river move. Behind his back
all the girls in the world passed
across the bridge unseen. On their way
to some place else, where some other
lover stands, perhaps waiting.
The flowing water down there
burns his eyes. This planet is a crucible.

2 April 2009

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Maybe the word is about to speak.

It looks like ordinary wood

but then it opens.

2.IV.09

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But if there were a book I needed
there would be the library right now
or tomorrow an author to write it.
What if it's a pale only shimmer of idea
to shine me a path? What if it's a voice
that answers me at last? *Peccavi*.
Is that what it is, a priest in purple stole
to hear my confession? *I have sinned*
but mine is a sin that has no name
how can I confess it? *Sein* = sin.
Being is a state of sin. No. That
must be the sickness, the dead owl
in the horse trough, the runaway slave.
Depression is anarchy, idiot philosophers
canting in salons, millionaire outfielders
roaring around drunk in golf carts,
adjectives weeping for their unknown nouns.

2 April 2009

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Not a mood but a meant.
Something on the move.
Allow the weather
that allows me — some are smiling.
The joy has to be inside,
true as a the newspaper at least.
This gloom is new at least.
I walk in fear.

2 April 2009

SHAPE OF A BAT ACROSS THE MOON

I came into the night
like any other animal—
mute till wounded.
Fear everything, creep
in the shade.

Even
the proudest beast is
furtive, scared.

Because not even animals
belong to the world,
don't you see that, René,
don't you see that no one
at all is at home here
but the rock itself,
the water, that move
immensely through us

and we are their dream.
What is a man
but a passage of water
through phosphorus and horn?

*Anything that gets born
is a stranger,*

life is itself the alien thing,
the fall itself.

And I have no shadow either—
all day long I give it away
and earth takes it in.

2 April 2009

= = = = =

I have no enemies
or have only enemies.
Who will guess
the twisting path between,
so dark among the trees
and there are no trees.

2 April 2009

(BAGATELLES)

At last I know what that sign means
a tree alone against the sky

* * *

Later name the tree,
beech.
Then name the sky.

* * *

So many things to think
so few think you back.

3 April 2009

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So much to tell
we spend our lives
telling about holes
never get around to
what holes are holes in.

3 April 2009

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To be as dumb as summer
and full of grief—

all that green
hurtles past
as if there were somewhere to go

You look at your back fence
and understand
it's all up to you.

The opening. To go.

3 April 2009

= = = = =

Hermetic chambers
where blue women rest
thinking yellow

they breathe red in
and green out

when we are lucky
from wherever we came
we come to their house.

3 April 2009